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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for thematic cluster II (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 16 November 2018.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).[1] In addition to the budget proposals for the 14 missions presented under cluster II (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1), the Secretary-General has submitted a separate proposal for an additional cluster II mission, the recently established United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) (A/73/352/Add.6, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.1 and A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.2).

[1] A/73/352/Add.1, A/73/352/Add.2, A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1, A/73/352/Add.3, A/73/352/Add.4 and A/73/352/Add.5.

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The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report (A/73/498), and the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA, UNAMI and UNITAD are covered in its related reports.[2]

II. Budget performance for 2018 and resource requirements for 2019

3. Table 1 provides information on the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for the 13 continuing special political missions under cluster II,[3] compared with the approved resources and projected expenditures for 2018.

Table 1
Resource requirements for 2019
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			*2019*		*Variance versus 2018*	*Net requirements for 2019*
	Appropriation	*Estimated expenditures*	*Estimated variance*	*Total requirements*	*Non-recurrent requirements*	*Increase (decrease)*	
Mission	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3)=(2)-(1)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)=(4)-(1)*	*(7)=(4)-(3)*
Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea	2 185.8	2 267.0	81.2	–	–	(2185.8)	81.2[a]
Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	1 288.9	1 344.5	55.6	1 319.2	–	30.3	1 374.8
Panel of Experts on the Sudan	978.9	1 024.0	45.1	1 072.3	–	93.4	1 117.4
Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	3 294.9	3 222.6	(72.3)	2 963.6	–	(331.3)	2 891.3
Panel of Experts on Libya	1 250.1	1 381.2	131.1	1 406.3	–	156.2	1 537.4
Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic	1 125.0	1 195.1	70.1	1 193.1	–	68.1	1 263.2
Panel of Experts on Yemen	2 154.6	2 115.9	(38.7)	2 280.3	–	125.7	2 241.6
Panel of Experts on South Sudan	1 349.0	1 322.6	(26.4)	1 357.7	–	8.7	1 331.3
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team	6 133.2	6 172.0	38.8	6 481.8	–	348.6	6 520.6
Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009)[b]	492.4	487.8	(4.6)	653.3	–	160.9	648.7
Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)	1 570.0	1 565.1	(4.9)	1 655.6	–	85.6	1 650.7
Panel of Experts on Mali	988.9	1 129.4	140.5	1 348.0	–	359.1	1 488.5
Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction	2 766.5	2 528.6	(237.9)	2 945.5	–	179.0	2 707.6

[2] A/73/498/Add.1, A/73/498/Add.2, A/73/498/Add.3, A/73/498/Add.4, A/73/498/Add.5 and A/73/498/Add.6.

[3] The Secretary-General proposes resource requirements for 2018 for 14 missions in his report (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea would be terminated with effect from 16 December 2018, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2444 (2018), and that the overall requirements under cluster II for 2019 had been adjusted to reflect the change.

	2018			2019		Variance versus 2018	Net requirements for 2019
Mission	Appropriation (1)	Estimated expenditures (2)	Estimated variance (3)=(2)-(1)	Total requirements (4)	Non-recurrent requirements (5)	Increase (decrease) (6)=(4)-(1)	(7)=(4)-(5)
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate	9 932.2	9 872.3	(59.9)	11 029.8	–	1 097.6	10 969.9
Total	**35 510.4**	**35 628.1**	**117.7**	**35 706.5**	**–**	**196.1**	**35 824.2**

[a] The Advisory Committee was informed that the overexpenditure of $81,200 for the Monitoring Group in 2018 would be requested as an appropriation for 2018.

[b] The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/262 A, requested the Secretary-General to report on the budget of the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009) separately from the budget of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (see also A/73/352, para. 3).

A. Budget performance for 2018

4. The estimated expenditures for cluster II in 2018 amount to $35,628,100, representing an increase of $117,700, or 0.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $35,510,400.

5. With regard to the budget implementation by category of expenditure, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 2 showing the main reasons for the variances between the appropriation and the estimated expenditures for 2018. **Considering that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2444 (2018), the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea has been terminated with effect from 16 December 2018, the Advisory Committee trusts that updated information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Table 2
Main reasons for variances between budget and estimated expenditures for 2018
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			
Category of expenditure	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Estimated variance	Reasons for variance
	1	2	3=2-1	
I. Civilian personnel				
1. International staff	15 107.9	15 191.3	83.4	The overexpenditure is due mainly to the higher civilian personnel costs resulting from higher average step in grade and entitlements of the incumbents than budgeted for.
2. National staff	230.9	210.6	(20.3)	The variance reflects mainly the provision at the actual average step in grade and dependency status of the current incumbents and the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Panel of Experts on Yemen and the Monitoring Group.
3. General temporary assistance	58.0	33.9	(24.1)	The variance reflects mainly that the salary payment for general temporary assistance is lower than budgeted for.
Total, category II	**15 396.8**	**15 435.8**	**39.0**	

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2018 Estimated expenditure	2018 Estimated variance	Reasons for variance
	1	*2*	*3 = 2-1*	
II. Operational costs				
4. Experts	13 485.1	13 426.0	(59.1)	The underexpenditure reflects mainly lower requirements for expert fees as a result of the delayed recruitment of experts who reached the end of their five-year limit on their contracts in 2017 and 2018 for two missions (support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and the Panel of Expert on Mali), offset in part by higher actual average monthly fees for the experts owing to a change in their terms of reference.
5. Official travel	1 860.6	1 935.9	75.3	The overexpenditure reflects mainly the requirements for travel of security officers to provide close protection to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali pursuant to the security risk assessment recommendations by the Department of Safety and Security, which were not provided for in the budget.
6. Facilities and infrastructure	2 467.5	2 695.9	228.4	The overexpenditure reflects mainly the additional requirements for security services, which were not provided for in the budget for the Panel of Experts on Mali, the higher actual cost of rental of office space and accommodation for the international staff in Sana'a based on the new lease agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and the common security costs shared among United Nations offices in Yemen.
7. Ground transportation	150.6	92.5	(58.1)	The variance reflects mainly the lower actual cost of rental of vehicles in Yemen and a reduction in requirements as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has provided ground transport at no cost to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali when they travel within the country.
8. Communications and information technology	1 241.7	1 117.6	(124.1)	The variance is attributable mainly to reduced requirements for database subscriptions as information is available in other databases of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
9. Medical	–	8.0	8.0	The variance reflects mainly actual expenditures for the common medical services shared with all United Nations offices in Yemen, which were not budgeted for.
10. Other supplies, services and equipment	908.1	916.4	8.3	The variance reflects mainly the non-provision for regional meetings for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the meeting schedule is based on requests from the relevant sanctions committee.
Total, category III	**20 113.6**	**20 192.3**	**78.7**	
Total requirements	**35 510.4**	**35 628.1**	**117.7**	

6. Concerning the underexpenditure of $58,100 for ground transportation, which partially reflects the reduced requirements for the Panel of Experts on Mali owing to the fact that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali provided ground transport at no cost to the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that some peacekeeping missions operating in the same location provided transportation during the start-up phase of a new special political mission, while cost-recovery or cost-sharing arrangements were being finalized. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the provision of ground transportation by a peacekeeping mission to a group of experts on a field trip and encourages the Secretariat to develop cost-sharing agreements in this regard and to apply them consistently, insofar as possible, with a view to reducing overall transportation costs.**

7. **While acknowledging that the overexpenditure for the special political missions under cluster II in 2018 amounting to $117,700 is limited and represents an increase of 0.3 per cent compared with the appropriation, the Advisory Committee considers that additional efforts should be made to improve the accuracy of the budget proposals.**

Staffing requirements

8. The Advisory Committee notes that the budget proposal for 2019 includes no request for new posts, while two posts are proposed for abolishment (one of Coordination Officer (P-3) and one of Administrative Assistant (General Service)) in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) on the basis of the workload projections for the procurement channel (A/73/352/Add.2, para. 175). With regard to the vacancy rate, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, as at 29 October 2018, of the 105 staff positions located in cluster II, 8 were vacant (5 in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and 3 for the implementation of resolution 2331 (2015)), for a vacancy rate of 6.7 per cent.

9. The Board of Auditors, in its report on the United Nations for 2017, observed that the granting of a special post allowance to staff assuming higher-level responsibilities had not been limited to exceptional cases during the biennium 2016–2017 (see A/73/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 93–99, and A/73/430, paras. 34–35).[4] The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that five staff members — four in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and one serving the Panel of Experts on the Sudan — were receiving a special post allowance as at 7 November 2018. **The Advisory Committee trusts that all vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to complete the recruitment process for the posts presently encumbered by staff members on a special post allowance promptly.**

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate

10. Upon enquiring as to the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate compared with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Advisory Committee was informed that, on the basis of the framework set out by the Security Council in its resolution 2395 (2017), the Executive Directorate assessed Member State capacity, analysed trends and challenges and provided counter-terrorism expertise for the United Nations. The main role of the Office was to coordinate United Nations efforts and build capacity. The Committee was also informed that the two entities reported

[4] The provisions governing special post allowance are contained in rule 3.10 of the Staff Rules (ST/SGB/2018/1) and administrative instructions ST/AI/1999/17, ST/AI/1999/17/Amend.1 and ST/AI/2003/3.

jointly on their cooperation to the Council, as required under paragraph 18 of the resolution.

B. Proposed resource requirements for 2019

11. As reflected in table 1, the proposed resource requirements for the missions under cluster II in 2019 amount to $35,706,500, representing an increase of $196,100, or 0.5 per cent, over the appropriation for 2018. The overall increase reflects the net effect of increased requirements for all current missions, except for the Monitoring Group and the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

12. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that, in 2019, the main increases in resource requirements by mission are proposed for the following reasons:

(a) Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate: the proposed increase of $1,097,600, or 11 per cent, is attributable mainly to higher civilian personnel costs, based on the proposed vacancy rate of 5 per cent applied for all positions, compared with the rate of 5 per cent applied for 44 positions and rate of 50 per cent applied for six new posts approved in 2018;

(b) Panel of Experts on Mali: the proposed increase of $359,100, or 36.3 per cent, is due mainly to higher civilian personnel costs, based on the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent in 2019 compared with the rate of 50 per cent approved for 2018 and the requirement for close protection security services for the experts during their travel in Mali;

(c) Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team: the proposed increase of $348,600, or 5.7 per cent, is attributable mainly to the higher civilian personnel costs resulting from the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent in 2019 compared with the rate of 14 per cent approved in 2018, in addition to the higher actual average fees for the experts resulting from the changes in the composition of the Team and their terms of reference.

13. The proposed increase would be partially offset by a decrease of $2,185,800 in the resource requirements for the Monitoring Group owing to the termination of the mission's mandate with effect from 16 December 2018 and of $331,300 in the resources for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is attributable to the fact that the security reinforcement of the office of the experts in the DC-2 building, for which resources were approved in 2018, is expected to be completed in 2018 and will not require additional resources in 2019 and to reduced database subscriptions in 2019 based on actual expenditure in 2018 (A/73/352/Add.2, para. 68).

14. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 3, showing the reasons for the variances between the appropriation for 2018 and the budget proposal for 2019.[5]

[5] Table 3 reflects the 13 continuing missions under cluster II, without UNITAD.

Table 3
Main reasons for variances between appropriation for 2018 and budget for 2019
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018	*2019*	*Variance*	
Category of expenditure	*Appropriation*	*Total requirements*	*2018 versus 2019 Increase (decrease)*	*Reasons for variance*
	1	*2*	*3=2-1*	
II. Civilian personnel				
1. International staff	15 107.9	16 695.1	1 587.2	The variance is due mainly to the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent to the cost estimates compared with the rate of 5 per cent factored for the six positions established in 2018 for the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the one position for the Panel of Experts on Mali. This is partly offset by the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the proposed abolishment of one position of Coordination Officer (P-3) and one position of Administrative Assistant (General Service — Other level) in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).
2. National staff	230.9	52.6	(178.3)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the provision at the actual average step in grade and dependency status of the current incumbents, as well as the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Panel of Experts on Yemen.
3. General temporary assistance	58.0	–	(58.0)	The variance is due to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group.
Total, category II	**15 396.8**	**16 747.7**	**1 350.9**	
III. Operational costs				
4. Experts	13 485.1	12 609.1	(876.0)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and was offset in part by the higher average actual fees of the experts owing to the change in their terms of reference requiring at least 10 years of experience, instead of 7, in 8 of the 14 special political missions, as well as the provision of the full requirements for the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009) in 2019, whereas a vacancy rate of 50 per cent had been approved in 2018.
5. Official travel	1 860.6	1 926.1	65.5	The variance reflects mainly the requirements for travel of security officers to provide close protection to the experts pursuant to the security risk assessment recommendations by the Department of Safety and Security, which were not provided for in the budget for 2018 for the Panel of Experts on Mali. This is partly offset by the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group.

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2019 Total requirements	Variance: 2018 versus 2019 Increase (decrease)	Variance: Reasons for variance
	1	2	3 = 2-1	
6. Facilities and infrastructure	2 467.5	2 419.8	(47.7)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the removal of provision for security services relating to costs of security officers travelling from other United Nations locations, and the fact that the reinforcing of the security of the office of the experts on the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the DC-2 building, for which resources were approved in 2018, is expected to be completed in 2018 and will not require further resources in 2019. This is offset in part by the higher actual cost of rental of office space and accommodation for international staff in Sana'a on the basis of the new lease agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and the common security costs shared among United Nations offices in Yemen.
7. Ground transportation	150.6	76.5	(74.1)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group, the lower actual cost of rental of vehicles in Yemen and the reduction in requirements as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has provided ground transport at no cost to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali when they travel within the country.
8. Communications and information technology	1 241.7	1 044.7	(197.0)	The variance is attributable mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the reduced requirements for database subscriptions as information is available in other databases of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
9. Medical	–	8.0	8.0	The variance reflects mainly actual expenditures for the common medical services shared with all United Nations offices in Yemen, which were not budgeted for in 2018.
10. Other supplies, services and equipment	908.1	874.6	(33.5)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the non-provision for regional meetings for the Panel of Expert for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the meeting schedule is based on requests from the relevant sanctions committee.
Total, category III	**20 113.6**	**18 958.8**	**(1 154.8)**	
Total requirements	**35 510.4**	**35 706.5**	**196.1**	

Experts

15. With regard to the proposed resource increase of $751,500 for the experts under cluster II in 2019, the Advisory Committee notes that it reflects the implementation of the recommendation of the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry concerning the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the number of years of experience required for the experts be increased from 7 to 10 (see S/2017/713). The Committee recalls that in 2018 the Secretary-General requested increased resources for the experts on mission in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan in relation to those new terms of reference (A/72/7/Add.12, paras. 20–21). The Committee was provided with information indicating that, as at 29 October 2018, all the experts on monitoring groups, teams and panels established by the Security Council, with one exception, had at least 10 years of experience. **The Committee notes that additional resources for the experts are proposed again for the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo ($13,400) and the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ($17,700) in 2019.**

16. **The Advisory Committee recalls its comments on the correlation between increased years of service from 7 to 10 and the potential for reduced security risks to the experts of the panels. The Committee trusts that additional information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2019 for the special political missions under cluster II (see A/72/7/Add.12, para. 22).**

17. Concerning the profile of the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the recruitment, selection and administration of the experts on monitoring teams, groups and panels established by the Security Council were governed by the administrative instruction on consultants and individual contractors (ST/AI/2013/4). The Committee was also informed that, when selecting the experts, competence and merit were the primary considerations, while every effort was made to take into account geographical and gender balance.

Standard of accommodation for air travel of experts on monitoring teams, groups and panels

18. With regard to the standard of air travel for the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that administrative arrangements for the experts were made in accordance with the framework and policies applicable to consultants. Accordingly, their travel is conducted in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 67/254 A and 71/272 B and administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3 and the amendments thereto. Economy class is the standard of accommodation for air travel in all cases, irrespective of the duration of the journey, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary-General, taking into account the circumstances of the traveller, including possible health issues.[6] **The Committee recalls that the nature of the work of the experts on the sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels is distinct from that performed under other consultancy contracts. The Committee therefore reiterates its recommendation that the General Assembly extend the standard of accommodation of the staff members of the Secretariat to these experts (see A/71/822, para. 7, and A/72/7/Add.12, para. 29).**

[6] See also the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of air travel policies in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2017/3, paras. 56–57).

III. Conclusion and recommendation

19. The budgetary proposals made by the Secretary-General for the special political missions for 2019, which require action to be taken by the General Assembly, are set out in paragraph 85 of his report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/73/352).

20. **Subject to the comments in paragraphs 5, 6, 9, 15, 16 and 18 above, as well as those contained in its main report (A/73/498), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposal of the Secretary-General for the resource requirements for 2019 for the 13 continuing special political missions under thematic cluster II.**